1:Du Bois E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
OF5 Alor OF5

Lastly there is a Protestant missionary, whose task is largely administrative. Under him are the casually educated missionary teachers, called gurus, who have been drawn mostly from other islands and who establish the actual proselytizing contacts with the mountain people. It is they who give the rudimentary instruction in Malay and in the three R's furnished in the twenty-five schools scattered throughout the high country. Such a school was in existence from 1925 to 1931 in the village area to be discussed. Then the school disintegrated owing to the hostility of the people to new gurus who replaced the original one. After 1933 only wandering preachers passed through the area. Their influence was minimal since they had no command of the local language and scarcely twenty of the mountain boys understood Malay.

The material that follows in this volume is drawn from a group of mountain people at Atimelang in the Barawahing district. This community lies above the northwest coast in the radjahship of Alor proper. It is only about five and a half miles from the port of Kalabahi as a crow flies, but by trail it is some fifteen miles, which take six to eight hours to cover on foot.

It is native custom in Alor to locate villages on mountain spurs and crests. This formerly furnished some degree of safety in warfare, but it makes water a problem, since springs may be as many as several hundred feet below in the ravine. Villages are usually small; a large one seldom has more than one hundred and fifty inhabitants. Since the pacification of the island by the Netherlanders, there has been some pressure on the natives to move their villages into more accessible locations, preferably on level stretches near the main horse trails that have been built across the island for official use.

The Atimelang complex is such a transposed group. In 1918 the area was embroiled in Alor's most serious war of pacification, which grew out of the murder of the radjah. The government then insisted that the five villages constituting the Atimelang complex move down from the ridges to the floor of an enclosed valley, which gives the impression of being an old volcanic crater. The floor of the valley is at an altitude of some 2500 feet, and the surrounding crest of hills rises between 300 and 500 feet higher. Since in the tropics temperatures drop rapidly with altitude, the thermometer registers usually between 70 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit. During eighteen months of recordings the minimum temperature was 59 degrees and the maximum 86 degrees. The humidity, however, even when the rains are over, is surprisingly high, and during the dry months from June to October the unclad mountain people suffer appreciable discomfort from the cold.

1:Du Bois E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
OF5 Alor OF5

144 Before going into detail about the nature of the Atimelang village complex, a few comments should be made on the physical type of its inhabitants. No generalizations are possible for the island as a whole. The Atimelangers are predominantly Oceanic Negroids although naturally strains of Oceanic Mongoloid blood may be detected. In any event, they cannot be thought of in terms of Indonesian populations.

147 Their physical composition has been studied by Dr. Brouwer,* and it is in part on his description that the next few statements are based. The average stature of males is about five feet one inch, that of females between four feet nine and four feet ten inches. Hair varies from wavy to kinky, skin color from light bronze to black, and red pigmentation in hair and skin is detectable in many individuals. Noses are short and of medium width, heads are long, and faces are often pentagonal. A com-

[147] bination of features and stature suggests a pygmoid strain in many individuals.

161 There is no conclusive evidence that the population of Alor is increasing, although the government tax list shows an augmentation of about ten thousand in the last decade. It is quite probable that this represents only better census taking, not a true increase. But certainly the population is not decreasing; my own rather inadequate statistics from Atimelang indicate that four children per woman grow to adulthood.

[165] This is more than enough to maintain the population level, despite a mortality rate of 48 per cent before adolescence. The excellent health

164 program instituted by the government has probably reduced the death rate; certainly *smallpox epidemics no longer sweep* the island as they once did. At present the most common diseases are dysenteries, respiratory infections, malaria, and yaws. The last, though seldom fatal, is extremely common in Atimelang, and few children escape the devastating skin lesions of its first stage. The possible effect on personality of these debilitating diseases, often suffered in acute form during childhood, is worth bearing in mind.

361 Atimelang is often called the Five Village district. It lies in large

162 part within the valley described above and has a relatively dense population. Within a radius of about one mile there are some six hundred people scattered among four major villages and their offspring hamlets. On the eastern side of the valley lies Atimelang and its two hamlets of Folafeng and Faramasang, with a total population of approximately 180 inhabitants. Closely allied to Atimelang by intermarriage is Lawstika, the fifth village of the complex, with about 100 people. Its population is scattered through three hamlets lying on the difficult slopes of the

*D. Brouwer, *Bijdrage tot de anthropologie der Alorvolkenen* (Amsterdam, n.d.).

1:Du Bois E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
OF5 Alor OF5

Limbur ravine below the valley floor. These villagers played a smaller part than the others in my observations.

On the western side of the valley are three closely allied villages with contiguous boundaries: Dikimpe (both the old and new sites) and its hamlet of Maiyamasang with a population of 114, Alurkowati with 95 people, and Karieta with 56. The remaining 50 of the approximate total of six hundred people on the valley floor and adjacent slopes occupy isolated field houses or are quite constantly absent on visits to other communities.

Although the villages are not rigorously stereotyped in ground plan, a general description can be given that covers the main features of all of them. Each village has from one to seven dance places, the number being roughly equivalent to the number of patrilineal lineages (*bieta*). On each dance place is located at least one of the large lineage houses (*kadang*), which is occupied by one branch only of the lineage. Around the edge of the dance place are the flat gravestones of the prominent dead of the community. From one dance place to another runs a narrow trail, along which other houses are sometimes strung.

Each village has a "head" and a "tail," where properly is located a carving of the village guardian spirit (*alemai*). The gardens and fields run to the very eaves of the houses, and during the rainy season corn and tobacco frequently screen the houses from each other. The fields then spread outward to spots an hour or more distant from the main village. Throughout these fields are temporary shelters, which are inhabited at the convenience of the owners. The tendency to decentralize habitation has undoubtedly been encouraged by the cessation of head-hunting in the last twenty years.

It is not necessary here to go into detail concerning either the social implications of village planning or the structure and types of houses. Neither of these aspects of living is rigorously formalized — a statement that holds true for almost all phases of Atimelang life. However, a general picture is necessary for orientation. The lineage houses and dance places are manifestations of a primarily patrilocal residence and the basis of social clusterings. The outward expression of such social groupings around the lineage house are the other less pretentious buildings (*fala* and *tofa*), the guesthouse (*neng tofa*), and various spirit sheds of the family group.

The larger houses of the kadang and fala types are pyramidal thatched structures raised on four piles protected by massive wooden disks, which prevent rats from climbing up the posts into the house. Beneath each house is a low verandah generally used for lounging but sometimes also

1:Du Bois E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
OF5 Alor OF5

ternal uncle, to emphasize his point, picked up Talfani and started back 595
to his village with her. The father flew into a rage and the child was 586
fought over by the two men. When the father finally secured the child, 155
he held her tightly in his arms all morning. Talfani's care had been primarily entrusted to her maternal grandmother, and when the grandmother finally left with her brother, the child wept so insistently to go with her that the father, with obvious reluctance, finally surrendered the child.

There was a similar situation when Nicolas divorced his first wife, by whom he had two sons, one about five years old and the other approximately two and a half. The father had had very little contact with the children, since he was away most of the time. On the other hand, for an Alorese parent, the mother had been particularly indulgent and fond. At the time of the divorce there were days of violent and public recrimination between the parents, which ended finally in the surrender of both children to the father and the departure of the mother to a distant village, where she was to marry another man.

Obviously all children are not exposed to such potentially traumatic 155
and affectionally disorienting situations, but practically no child escapes being witness to such occurrences. In the autobiographies there are a number of anecdotes demonstrating the skill children develop in playing one parent off against the other. The result of all this must be that the child is robbed of a sense of security and stability by being deprived of the opportunity to form a pattern of stable relationships.

RESIDENCE

Mobility of residence is another factor that may contribute to a 341
child's sense of instability. During early childhood such a sense of insta- [58]
bility may begin to take form and it will be emphasized by later repetition. The autobiographies give the most graphic picture of constant moving from house to house, village to village, and village to field. It is true that these moves are always within a circumscribed orbit. The result may be that a person becomes familiar with a landscape rather than with a residence.

Alorese houses are perishable. A field house rarely lasts more than [342]
two seasons. A village house of the fala type may last five or six years, a lineage house (*kaleng*) somewhat longer. No one place of residence is constantly occupied for any great length of time. Even within the yearly agricultural cycle a family is apt to move back and forth between a village house and a field house.

The child's escape from irksome home life by changes of residence 155